

Nordic forests play a key role in the establishment of the Nordic welfare states. They also play a key role in a global perspective when looking at factors such as energy, climate, land use, ecosystem services and other subsistence uses. In this book the aim is to address how global changes are likely to affect the conditions for future Nordic forest use.

This is done by identifying pivotal areas for action, e.g. changing energy systems, emerging international climate policies, changing governance systems and shifting global land use system. Demographic and economic developments underlie all of these areas and the authors seek to discuss developments that can cause transformations and their possible implications for future Nordic forest uses. Different chapters of the book focus on specific themes and give long-term estimates, forecasts and scenarios. The important role of forest governance and policy making is one of the main themes in the book and become an underlying factor when addressing other themes. Also, the authors compare two major northern forest producing nations, Sweden and Canada, which both are experiencing a transition.

The book is edited by three scientists who all have long research experience within diverse sectors of forestry-related issues. Seven other authors with various backgrounds use a range of different approaches to explore global trends and their implications for future Nordic forest use. The book is produced within the Future Forest Research Program (www.futureforest.se).

The book is an important contribution within its field and demonstrates the need to look at the relationship between the changing and the static. Given the diverse purposes that forests have, the authors manage to focus on interesting themes and deal with the most important questions regarding the future role of Nordic forests. They also manage to underline the importance of Nordic forests in the global perspective quite well. The emphasis on forest politics and governance in general is highly relevant and becomes one of the most interesting themes of the book. Also, themes like bioenergy and climate change are of high relevance and reflect the need to look at forest resources on a global scale. The chapter focusing on global trends and possible future land use is of high importance too and addresses four main trends: future energy demand, future food demand, future demand for various forest products and climate change. The author of that chapter estimates that the

global demand for industrial wood will increase approx. 50% until 2030. This increase needs to be linked to other land use changes and the main conclusion is that various processes must be assessed together as they are closely related. The author emphasises the need to develop efficient policies and measurements within the sector.

Although the discussion on the role of forests providing ecosystem services is, to some extent, involved in various chapters, the book would have benefitted by addressing more the diverse ecosystem services that forests provide, such as water protection, biodiversity protection, recreation, etc. Also, the administrative, legal and social aspects of forest management are well defined, but less emphasis is put on the scientific and technical aspects of forest management.

The comparison of two northern forest nations, Sweden and Canada, and their transition in forestry is interesting. In Canada the whole forest sector is being mobilized through different frameworks that seek to motivate its agents, while in Sweden the transition has been driven by individual forest industry companies. This comparison shows the importance of looking at challenges, trade-offs and opportunities on a global scale in order to learn from each other.

The book is well written, its topic is highly relevant and should be of a great interest for people working within the forest sector as well as teachers and students within the field. It should also be of interest for the general public, since issues like climate change and energy inevitably concern every person living on Earth.

Taken together, the book gives a great overview of the role of Nordic forests and puts them into a global perspective. One of the editors concludes at the end of the book that "the book provides a rather consistent view, pointing towards a scarcity crisis for land-based resources in 2050". He also points out that those outlooks are highly linked to "inefficient decision-making systems and institutional shortcomings". If these predictions turn out to be right, then it should be of high importance to start to prepare both on local, national and global levels. This has to be done through policy and with negotiations between nations with the aim to perform global agreements. A good understanding on the basic relationships within the forest sector is the best way for nations to discuss the options for the future and, furthermore, to govern the future.

Erik Westholm, Karin Beland Lindahl & Florian Kraxner (eds.), The
Future Use of Nordic Forests, A global perspective (Dordrecht:
Springer, 2015) | 3

Share this:

Share